

NORTHAMPTON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

Dec. 4, 2008

City Hall 2nd Floor Meeting Room

Staff Contact: Chris Mason, Energy and Sustainability Officer, (413) 587-1055,
cmason@northamptonma.gov

Present:

Maureen T. Carney	Anthony Patillo
James M. Dostal	David Pomerantz
Wayne Feiden/Bruce Young	Scott Silver
Ned Huntley	John Szafranski
Catherine Miller	

Also present: Peggy MacLeod

1. Call to Order

Since the Commission does not yet have a Chair, Chris Mason, The Energy and Sustainability Officer called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

N/A

3. Roll Call/Introductions

Commissioners introduced themselves.

4. Any adjustments needed to agenda?

Short history of NERC was moved up and included with the review of the NESC ordinance

5. Review of the ordinance/NESC responsibilities and powers

Chris Mason led a brief discussion based on the attached notes, "Context for a new NERC" and the NESC Ordinance: SECTION 22 § 52-55 – ARTICLE IX Energy and Sustainability Commission, which is available on the City web site

Decisions and items of note:

- Chris Mason will investigate whether there are any financial accounts available to the NESC that were used by the old NERCs.

6. Discussion: decision-making process to be used, what is a quorum, open meeting law requirements, public comment periods, etc.

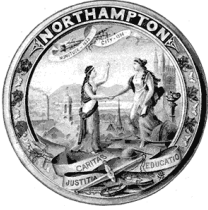
Decisions and items of note:

- The Energy and Sustainability Officer, as staff to the Commission, will take and publish meeting minutes

Voting Members: Jonathan Black • Maureen T. Carney • James M. Dostal • Wayne Feiden/Bruce Young • Denzel Hankinson • Ned Huntley • Catherine Miller • Anthony Patillo • David Pomerantz • Scott Silver • John Szafranski

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- Commissioners will be responsible to bring their own hardcopies of agendas, minutes, and other meeting paperwork
- Alternatively, there is wireless access available for commissioners who want to go paperless
- The Energy and Sustainability Officer will post minutes and agendas on the City's NESC web site. (www.northamptonma.gov/energyresources/NESC/)

Unresolved discussions:

- Public comments, when, for how long, does this need to be specified?
- On-line discussion group capability where additional NESC documents can be stored for access. Wayne Feiden will investigate RRS feeds.

7. **Discussion: Election of chair and any other officers**

Election of a chair was tabled until all commissioners have a chance to meet each other and are available for a vote.

8. **Identify regular meeting times & places**

The Commission will meet on the 4th Thursday of each month in the City Council Chambers from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm. The Commission will next meet on Jan. 22, 2009.

9. **Outline of energy-related City projects underway/considered (details in pre-meeting package)**

Discussed:

- Northampton's Energy Service Performance Contract project
- Massachusetts Green Communities Act
- Massachusetts / Northampton's Building Code
- Existing and Potential Renewable Energy Projects in Northampton (funding sources, PV arrays, landfill gas to electricity, hydro power on Mill river)
- Tracking City Energy Use
- Past Energy Audits of City Buildings
- Idea of a Western MA Energy Alliance similar to the Cambridge Energy Alliance
- Wayne Feiden presented a document describing the growing number of LEED-rated buildings in Northampton

10. **Short history of NERC and Energy Officer – Chris Mason**

Included in discussion of ordinance/NESC responsibilities and powers

11. **Option A – Discussion of commission priorities (maybe include a brainstorming session)**

Although no formal votes were taken, some commissioners identified qualifying to be a MA Green Community as a high priority.

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Items of note:

- The City still needs to compile data on transportation fuel use for creating an energy baseline. There is already a structure to gather on-going data for buildings and other DPW structures (fuel oil, natural gas, electric, propane).
- Wayne Feiden will draft suggested actions pertaining to zoning changes needed to become a MA Green Community
- Tony Patillo will call BBRS to clarify status and timing of changes expected in the energy conservation portions of the MA Building Code, and thus Northampton building code
- Scott Silver expressed a desire to be involved in discussions and meetings regarding a western MA energy alliance. Chris Mason will coordinate with Scott on upcoming meetings.

12. Agenda items suggested for next meeting

Green Communities Act

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Chris Mason
Energy and Sustainability Officer
12/9/08*

Attachments:

Context for the Northampton Energy and Sustainability Commission (NESC)

Chris Mason - November 24, 2008

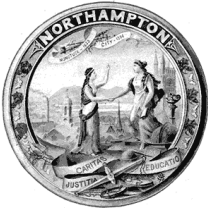
Legal Basis for a City Energy Resource Commission

The City is empowered to form an Energy Resource Commission through Chapter 40: Section 8I (MGL c. 40, § 8I) of the General Laws of Massachusetts. (See attached)

Historical NERC

Historically, the NERC was a 7-person body composed of members of the public who offered their time and energy to help the City, as described in the original ordinance, to "...develop programs relating to energy conservation, nonrenewable energy supply and resource development, recycling and energy information." The NERC often worked with a City energy officer, who at times was a contract worker and at other times was a City employee.

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From what I can discern from old records and discussions with people involved with previous NERCs, previous NERCs worked primarily with the City's energy officers and Central Services to help the City reduce its energy consumption. It helped the City reduce energy consumption from City street and traffic lights, monitor the municipality's energy use, conduct energy audits of city buildings—particularly schools—and implement energy efficiency upgrades to City buildings. Although this is an incomplete list, it should be noted that all of their accomplishments had to do with municipal energy use.

From my inquiries, the successes of previous NERCs has been attributed to the following:

- They had ready access to a City employee to work with—the City's Energy Officer,
- They often (if not always) had buy-in of and assistance from the City's Central Services Department
- Commission members included enough people with available time and willingness to follow through on projects—in particular, commission chairs were able to dedicate a requisite amount of time and effort to commission activities
- Commission members included people with the necessary skill sets (e.g., engineering and facilities management skills) to successfully map out and complete the projects they took on—in particular, commission chairs often had some form of energy engineering expertise

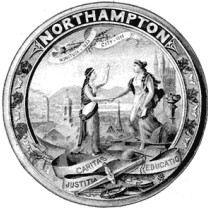
A New Northampton Energy and Sustainability Commission (NESC)

The Sustainable Northampton Plan (SNP) states as an action item:

“Reconstitute and revitalize a new Energy Resources Commission modeled on the successful structure of the Transportation and Parking Commission to include City staff, board members, and citizens. This Commission should have the ability to assist in implementing and keeping the community focus on the energy goals of this plan, including collecting data, proactively examining alternative, renewable, and sustainable energy options (i.e. solar power, vegetable oil and biodiesel options, methane digester power, landfill gas generation, and hydropower from the Connecticut and Mill rivers). The Commission should be coordinated with the Energy Officer, and responsible for organizing community education efforts.”

The SNP goes on to task the new commission with working with other commissions, boards, and the Energy Officer to: achieve energy savings in City operations, set energy efficient building standards for City and community buildings, prepare a Climate Change Protection Action Plan (as an addendum to the SNP), update the City's ICLEI Inventory for Climate Protection, conduct public education on the City's climate protection initiatives, report how City land use ordinances could address GHG reductions, develop monitoring programs for City building's environmental performance, and prepare incentive

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programs to motivate residents and citizens to improve energy efficiency and increase use of renewable energy.

Perhaps the conceptual changes between previous NERCs and a new NESC can be summed up in the following three points. The new commission should:

- a) be structured so as to more closely coordinate its efforts with the efforts of several City departments and boards—following the model of the successful Northampton Transportation and Parking Commission—while maintaining its traditional involvement of citizen members
- b) have a broader mandate that includes climate protection as a basis for energy efficiency improvements and increased use of renewable sources of energy
- c) work on projects that go beyond Municipal operations to include working with City residents and businesses

Reasoning Behind New NESC Ordinance Language (See attached ordinance.)

- The commission has been enlarged from seven to eleven members in order to achieve the mix of City staff, board members, and citizens as called for in the draft Sustainable Northampton Plan.
- The purpose of the new commission has been broadened to include working on energy issues within all City sectors (municipal, school, business, commercial, and residential) and
- The stated Powers Duties and Functions were modified to include mitigating the potential negative effects of energy resource disruption/depletion and climate change impacts as well as advancing energy-resource sustainability and climate change protection programs. They also state that the commission should coordinate action with any City department or other City board or commission to achieve its goals.
- The membership clause of the ordinance is written so as to give the commission the ability to seat members that have the skills and knowledge the commission deems it needs. Note: With the broader mandate, the skills and knowledge needed by the new commission may be different than previous commissions and change over time as the commission shifts focus between municipal and citywide projects.
- The commission will be able to draw upon a broader array of skills and knowledge by keeping the ability of previous commissions to seat associate members.

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